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ABSTRACT

Effective schools exhibit unique structures and continuous change. Moral imperatives inspire people to sustain the commitment critical to building effective schools. Over 450 interviews with practitioners, parents, board members, politicians, academics, union leaders, consultants, and others are joined with background literature and research to generate a portrait of effective schools from across the nation, encompassing all socioeconomic strata. This comprehensive approach illustrates the processes of personal and institutional transformations at the core of effective schools. Drawing on both general analysis and specific examples of effective schools from across the nation, chapters include investigations of their history; Hollibrook Elementary School (Texas) and the practices of superintendent of the Spring Branch School District (Texas); the impact of business paradigms on administrators; controversial leaders imposing system wide accountability; principals' instructional leadership promoting effective schools and their experiences of rapid changes from hierarchical to collaborative decision making; teachers' perceptions of change, accountability, training inadequacies, and decision making powers; the process of implementation; the emotional repercussions of implementation on parents and students; the changes required of central offices, state departments of education, and school boards; and the schools' integration of past lessons as they grow into their next generation. The effective schools process provides the means and the skills to extend a quality education to everyone and transform ineffective schools. (Contains over 200 references.) (TEJ)

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